

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory's Enterprise Development Program – Support for Entrepreneurs

*NREL is the U.S. DOE's premier
Lab for renewable energy &
energy efficiency research,
development and deployment.*



NREL's Mission

NREL develops renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies and practices, advances related science and engineering, and transfers knowledge and innovations to address the nation's energy and environmental goals. For more information on NREL visit www.nrel.gov.

As part of this mission we work with networks of entrepreneurs, investors, large energy firms, incubators and state and local organizations to help entrepreneurs successfully bring their technologies to the marketplace.

Sites for Entrepreneurs

Over the past 5 years NREL has been building an innovative technology transfer program, *Enterprise Development*, focused on empowering the entrepreneur with information, contacts, and opportunities to meet and learn from leaders in the energy, investment, and business community. The main NREL entrepreneurial web site, which contains many additional resources, is at <http://www.nrel.gov/technologytransfer/entrepreneurs/entrepreneurs.html>. The key elements of this program are listed below.

- **NREL Industry Growth "Venture" Forums** are similar to a venture capital forum and provide clean energy entrepreneurs an opportunity to present their business cases to an expert panel of investors and energy executives. See: <http://www.cleanenergyforum.com/>. Proceedings on the last forum held in Austin TX in Nov. 2003, are at: http://www.nrel.gov/technologytransfer/entrepreneurs/16_forum_results.html
- **The National Alliance of Clean Energy Business Incubators** is an alliance of the nations top incubators committed to incubating and providing business services to clean energy entrepreneurs. See: <http://www.nrel.gov/technologytransfer/entrepreneurs/pdfs/incubator4.pdf>
- **The Clean Energy Investor Directory** contains contact and profile information for about 100 investors that are currently interested in clean energy technology businesses. All interested investors with individual access to capital resources are welcome to sign up (includes angel collaborative; not intended for brokers). To view and/or sign up see: <http://www.nrel.gov/technologytransfer/entrepreneurs/directory.html>
- **NREL Growth Link** is a web-based directory of clean energy companies seeking financing, partnering, and growth opportunities. Investors and energy firms can use the directory to find clean energy technologies that match their investment and strategic interests. To view and/or sign up see: <http://nrelgrowthlink.incubator.com/>

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II. How NREL Works With Technology Partners

The major forms of federal technology development sponsorship are Grants, Sub-Contracts, and Cooperative Research and Development Agreements (CRADA's). Other agencies beyond NREL may also provide support. See for example: <http://www.nrel.gov/technologytransfer/entrepreneurs/gfp.html>.

NREL does not fund Grants and it does not fund unsolicited proposals. Subcontracts are however, a very important, and integral part of NREL activity – in fact, about 50% of the NREL budget is focused on subcontracted efforts. The vast majority of these subcontracts are put in place using a competitive process – via a Request for Proposals with R&D partners as part of a technology program such as Photovoltaics, Wind, Biomass Power, etc. (See <http://www.nrel.gov/research.html#getting> for a short list of the major technologies). To become a subcontractor in a technology program you should, review the current solicitation lists, respond to the appropriate RFP's, and get your organization on the solicitation list. See: http://www.nrel.gov/business_opportunities/.

For information on participating with NREL using “work for others” (WFO), **Cooperative Research and Development Agreements (CRADAs)**, and on using **NREL Facilities** see: <http://www.nrel.gov/technologytransfer/partners.html>. WFO's allow NREL to act as a subcontractor to the entity wanting work done. CRADA's allow industry access to NREL staff and facilities. Work must focus on technology research or development issues of mutual interest to the industry partner and to NREL. CRADA's are either “no funds exchanged,” or “funds in” from the industry partner to NREL. Contact Jennifer Schofield at 303-384-7424 for requirements and conditions on CRADA's. Key facilities are described at: <http://www.nrel.gov/facilities.html>.

To license NREL technology see <http://www.nrel.gov/technologytransfer/license.html>. Contact Dave Christensen at 303-275-3015, or Rich Bolin at 303-275-3028 for more information.

NREL Publications are often helpful to non-NREL people in a number of ways. The NREL Publication Data Base is at: <http://www.nrel.gov/publications/>. For example, a publication that a good many folks on the outside like, as it gives some good info on R&D focus and what we think are some related trends, is the Research Review (this is updated periodically and a new version will probably be available some time in early 2004); you can access the most recent version at: <http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy02osti/31967.pdf>.

Key Reports of potential interest for entrepreneurs include:

- **Transitioning to Private Sector Financing: Characteristics of Success (3/02)**
<http://www.nrel.gov/docs/gen/fy02/31192.pdf>
- **Bridging the Valley of Death: Transitioning from public to Private Sector Financing.(5/03)**
<http://www.nrel.gov/docs/gen/fy03/34036.pdf>
- **NREL Industry Growth Forums - Lessons Learned (6/99):**
http://www.nrel.gov/technologytransfer/entrepreneurs/pdfs/industry_growth.pdf

Other:

Because of fairness of opportunity, **NREL does not evaluate technologies**, or business plans for individual companies or for the public in general, but focuses on support for the DOE technology programs in which it has a role; these technology programs in turn support “industry groups” through the competitive subcontracting process.

Please, if you contact us, **do not disclose, or send any proprietary or confidential information to anyone at NREL unless specifically requested.** Such requests are only made in special situations (e.g. in support of negotiations for a CRADA). Although typically NREL does not sign confidentiality agreements, this can be done if a special need exists.